



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **School Committee Minutes 02/26/2008**

*Approved by School Committee March 11, 2008*

**THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2008**  
**7:30 PM**

**Present:**

School Committee: Susan Lovelace, Chair Denise Burns  
Sean Garballey, Vice Chair Joe Curran  
Jeff Thielman, Secretary Sue Sheffler  
Ronald Spangler

Superintendent: Nate Levenson  
Asst. Superintendent: Kathleen Bodie  
Chief Financial Off: Sue Mazzarella  
Interim Sp. Ed. Dir: Gerald Kopperschmidt  
Student Rep Callie McHugh  
Student Rep: Bobby McWatters

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

**CONSENT AGENDA** – all items listed with an asterisk (\*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Committee so requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

- \*Approval of the minutes from February 12, 2008
- \*Approval of Warrant # 08109 dated February 12, 2008 amount of \$461,096.15
- \*Approval of hiring grant writing firm Robert Miller and Associates

**On a motion by Mr. Spangler and seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was voted to accept the consent agenda.**  
**Vote 7:0 unanimous**

**RECOGNITION**

Ms. Lovelace acknowledged the artwork from students of Deb Chisholm in grades K-2 and 5 from the Peirce School.

The Arlington High School Literary Magazine "Imagine" was given a rank of Superior in its Program to Recognizes Excellence in Student Literary Magazines from the National Council of Teachers of English. Congratulation to Natalie Larson, Joanna Winkler, Nate Cubeta, Margaret Clayton, and Jean Dao and the Student Editors and AHS Advisors: Stacy Kitsis and Leia Richardson.

Two Arlington High School and eighteen Ottonson students were selected to participate in the Northeast Junior District Music Festival

**AHS**

John DeCoursey, Band, clarinet

Tanya Gorbunova, Flute, band

Ottonson Middle School

Tina Kambil, Bari Sax, Band

Linnea Kirby, band, bassoon

Samuel Rivera, trumpet, band

Yoshira Sakurai, Mallets, band

Alex Travassos, Band, Trumpet

Nathan Canada, chorus

*Siddharth Hiregowdara, chorus*

*Kate Berry, chorus*

*Anna Blachman, chorus*

*Andreanne Breton-Carbonneau, chorus*

*Gabriella Tashjian, chorus*

*Julia Weinberg, chorus*

*Eric Cheng, orchestra, cello*

*Sally Chung, orchestra, cello*

*Jennifer Kim, orchestra, viola*

*Ryan Salocks, orchestra, viola*

*David Shin, orchestra, violin*

*Karl Zimmer Orchestra, violin*

*This week the AHS Varsity Boys Basketball, Girls Hockey and the Boys Hockey teams will participate in Tournament Games and the committee wishes them well.*

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE**

##### **Policy and Procedures:**

**Ron Spangler**

##### **Second Reading**

*BBA School Committee Powers and Duties*

*CBI Evaluation of the Superintendent*

*CBI-E Superintendent Evaluation Tool*

***On a motion by Mr. Spangler and seconded by Mr. Thielman it was motioned to amend the policies as proposed and approve BBA School Committee Powers and Duties, CBI Evaluation of the Superintendent and CBI-E Superintendent Evaluation Tool***

***Vote 7:0 unanimous***

*Due to the Public Hearing scheduled for 8:00 Mr. Levenson spoke on agenda item seven, The Update of Thompson and Stratton Facilities, to fill in the fifteen minutes.*

#### **UPDATE ON THOMPSON AND STRATTON FACILITIES**

*Mr. Levenson presented the Thompson and Stratton Reconstruction update to the committee. Both schools need major upgrading and major elements of the plan are posted on the website.*

#### **PUBLIC HEARING ON 2008-2009 SCHOOL BUDGET**

*Mr. Garballey stated with a \$1.25 million dollar deficit the school committee had asked parents to answer and provide input to a survey that was prepared by School Committee Chair, Ms. Lovelace and member Mr. Spangler. Superintendent Levenson noted that the proposed budget was a draft and he welcomes input from the public, School Committee members and from the administration and staff.*

*Public participants who spoke on the budget were, Jim Dinaro, Betsy Krimens, Mark Kagen. Gordon Jamieson, Gary Goldman, Annette Sassey, Bob Higgins, Liz Diggins, Joe Gidas, Margaret Moody and Barbara Goodman.*

*The greater parts of public participants were recommending not to eliminate the elementary classroom teachers and to maintain reasonable class sizes. The parents also spoke on the current third grade classrooms that are currently overcrowded and would not like this to continue in grade four. The majority of the crowd was briefly surveyed and agreed to increase the lunch program to about \$3.00.*

*Barbara Goodman would like parents and the community to attend various Stand Events to get the state to give the schools and towns what they need to help the communities with budget deficits.*

#### **SCHOOL BUDGET DISCUSSION**

*Ms. Lovelace presented a power point presentation on the Summary of Results on the School Committee FY 2009 Budget Survey. The survey is a point of information provided to Superintendent Levenson and is not intended to solve the budget deficit with increasing fees. This presentation can be found on our website. Mr. Thielman had made the following~motion and Ms. Sheffler had asked for~various budget options with a list of revenue-generated ideas.~*

***On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Mr. Garballey it was motioned to***

***Move the Superintendent to be directed to build an alternative budget to reflect state community priorities by proposing ways to increase fee revenues in order to retain teachers and preserve small classes. Pursuant to policies JJD "Student Activity Fees" and JFABA "Kindergarten Fee Policy," the alternative budget must assure that no student is denied the ability to participate in any activities or all day kindergarten due to financial reasons.***

***Raising fees is an undesirable step. The Superintendent must make all efforts to minimize fee increases while reflecting priorities expressed through the on-line survey, tonight's public hearing and School Committee discussion.***

***The alternative budget is to be given to School Committee members and made available to the public no later than Thursday, March 6<sup>th</sup> in preparation for the School Committee's schedule vote on the FY '09 budget on Tuesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>.***

***Vote 7:0 unanimous***

*The committee members were all in agreement that each activity a student participates in, such as sports or drama, is important and an increase in athletic fees that were hard hit last year is not favorable. Student Representative Callie McHugh echoed that sports are important to students self esteem and the expense of the fees are high enough for the sports teams and would like to continue to keep students involved with after school activities. Ms. Lovelace pointed out to the committee that it will be difficult to vote any budget presented to the committee on March 11<sup>th</sup> but that the committee would be able to make amendments and a vote must be taken.*

*Ms. Burns would like Superintendent Levenson to report back to the committee on reducing the professional development budget of \$235,000 and cut it 50% and 75%.*

*A few committee members have presented numerous questions about the draft budget and the superintendent will report back to the committee when these are completed.*

*Ms. Lovelace noted the School Committee and Superintendent Retreat will be held this Friday, February 29, 2008 from 2-4 pm at the Whittemore Robbins House with the administration team to continue the proposed budget discussions.*

#### ***SUPERINTENDENT REPORT***

*Nate Levenson reported on the success of Hardy ELL open house with parents and families of English Language Learners. Kathryn Goldman a teacher at Hardy who will extend her teaching experience in our sister city of Japan one more year, hopes to have one possible second teacher joining her to teach at no cost to the district. Superintendent Levenson also reported on a membership sponsored through Arlington Public Schools Foundation and AEEF with Primary Source, an institution that provides curriculum enrichment in social studies. Nate and Ron also explained the planning for enhanced Science, Engineering and Technology classes offered to Arlington students and staff over the next few years.*

#### ***ADJOURN***

***On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Ms. Burns it was voted to Adjourn at 10:35 pm***

***Vote 7:0***

*Submitted by:*

*Karen Fitzgerald,  
Administrative Assistant,  
School Committee*